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ABSTRACT

The paper describes procedures designed to increase active academic responding in reading by intermediate level learning disabled students in an inner city school. The study investigated a home tutoring program applied by parents and teachers. The program increased the amount of reading time for selected students while providing parents with a correction procedure designed to maximize reading time. Results indicated that the home tutoring procedures increased academic learning time, doubling students' rates of correctly read words per minute, and substantially reduced errors. Little change was observed in students' accuracy of responding to comprehension questions, as group accuracy was generally 70% throughout. (Author/SB)

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A Home Tutoring Procedure to Increase Opportunity to Respond and Increase In-Class Oral Reading Skills of Learning Disabled Minority Children

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to describe procedures designed to increase active academic responding in reading. The study investigated a home tutoring program applied by parents and teachers in a classroom for learning disabled students. The program increased the amount of reading time for selected students while providing parents a correction procedure designed to maximize reading time.

Results indicated that the home tutoring procedures increased academic learning time doubling students' rates of correctly read words per minute and substantially reduced errors. Little change was observed in students' accuracy of responding to comprehension questions, as group accuracy was generally 70% throughout. The implications of these procedures are discussed in terms of use for remediation and in regular instruction programs.

Introduction

Much of the recent applied research in the basic skills areas has advocated increasing active learning time in association with the teaching of reading, mathematics, and language (Bloom, 1974; Stallings, 1975, 1977; Rosenshine & Berliner, 1978), but to date only a few experimental studies have investigated the functional effects of these procedures (Becker, 1977, 1978; Berliner, Note 1; Reith, Polsgrove, Semmel & Cohen, Note 2; Delquadri, Greenwood, Stretton, & Hall, Note 3). Two experimental approaches to increasing academic learning time and the opportunity to respond during instruction have been discussed by Hall, Delquadri, & Harris, Note 4; Greenwood, Delquadri, Stanley, Sasso, Whorton, & Schulte, Note 5; Greenwood, Delquadri, Stanley, Terry & Hall, Note 6; and Delquadri, Greenwood, & Hall, Note 7.

The first, increasing opportunities to practice, are approached by changes in classroom structure and/or teacher-student interactions. For example, in a public school classroom utilizing a simple error correction procedure (Hall et al., Note 4) the authors found that rates of correctly spelled words could be increased dramatically. In addition, tutoring procedures conducted by classroom teachers have been shown to increase oral reading rates with children in classrooms for learning disabled students (Delquadri, Note 8).

In the second approach, increasing active learning time has been achieved by involving parents or other students in providing the extra time through tutoring. For example, tutoring procedures conducted outside of the classroom by parents of low achieving and learning disabled students have shown significant increases in oral reading performance (Delquadri, Note 9); and in spelling and vocabulary performance (Broden, Beasley, & Hall, 1978; Thurston & Heggie, Note 10).

Thus, opportunities to respond have been accelerated by increasing the time students spend engaged in academic tasks, as well as structuring that time to permit increased rates of correct responding through the use of tutoring procedures both in the classroom and at home.

The purpose of the present research was to extend the concept of "opportunity to respond" to the basic skill area of reading. Parent home turoring was studied to : (1) assess the increment in opportunity to respond produced, (2) assess the effects of increased opportunity to respond and a simple correction procedure on oral reading correct and error rate, (3) assess the effects of increased correct responding on comprehension, and (4) verify that the procedures could be effectively carried out by teachers, students, and parents.

Method

Subjects and Setting

Participants were selected from a self-contained intermediate level learning disabilities classroom, containing 4th to 6th grade students at the Fairfax School, an inner-city elementary school in Kansas City, Kansas. Three of the ten students in the classroom, selected by the teacher based on the child's need and the anticipated cooperation by the parents, participated.

Materials: To facilitate the exchange of information between parent tutor and teacher, a "Home-School Form" with space for information concerning page numbers, start and stop points, tutoring scores, in-class reading scores, and comments, was utilized. This form was sent home daily and returned to the teacher the next day by the student. An additional "Teacher Form" was utilized for classroom data collection. This form contained areas for page numbers, number of words read, error words, and comprehension scores on 4 questions. Parents and teachers were also provided with timing devices to assist in their collection of data for this project.

Subject 1 was tutored using the 4th grade Ginn 720 Series, which was his grade placement level. Subjects 2 and 3 were tutored using the Merrill remedial material at a level comensurate with their functional reading abilities.

Dependent Measures: The primary dependent measures consisted of correct words read orally per minute, errors per minute, and the percent of oral comprehension questions answered correctly. The teacher collected these measures in the classroom daily utilizing the "Teacher Form". First, each student was instructed to read orally to the teacher for 2 minutes during which time no correction was made for errors. The teacher counted the number of words read and determined the errors made by each subject. Following the 2 minute rate collection, the teacher asked the subject four comprehension questions and scored them as correct or incorrect. The comprehension questions consisted of four types; recall, vocabulary, sequence, and interpretation as described by Lovitt and Hansen (1976).

Reliability: Interobserver agreement for the home tutoring procedure was assessed in every condition, for each target child, in both school and home settings. A second observer listened to a recording of this 2 minute session in which the teacher obtained oral reading scores and computed correct and error words per minute. Similarly, measures were taken by the parent-tutor in the home. Here the parents obtained the same measures as the teacher, scoring both words read correctly and incorrectly. A consultant checked agreement with the parent at home. Levels of agreement were computed by dividing the smaller frequency of correct and error words by the larger and multiplying by 100. Twelve reliability checks over the 3 target students were conducted yielding scores ranging from 82% to 94% with a mean of 85.6%. The six reliability checks conducted in the home yielded a range of 81% to 98% with a mean of 88%.

Procedures

A multiple-baseline design (Baer, Wolf, & Risley, 1968) across subjects was used to determine the effects produced by the tutoring and error correction procedure. Although tutoring was done in the home and/or outside of the classroom, all measures of reading were taken in the classroom. Hence, the data represents a measure of generalization from home to the classroom.

Following initial contact with the teacher and students, training for parents of two of the target students was completed. When it became clear that the third subject's parents could not participate, an alternative tutor, a sixth grade student from a regular classroom, was trained to provide the necessary instruction at school.

Baseline: Daily 2-minute reading rates were assessed for all three children based upon their reading in the Merrill Linguistic Series, a remedial reading curriculum used in this classroom. These measures were based on the stories in the text that had been assigned by the teacher for that particular day. For Subject 1, a second baseline was also assessed in the 4th grade level of the Ginn 720 Basal Reading Series, the reading text that was currently being used in regular classrooms in the district.

Treatment: During treatment the teacher continued collecting daily reading rate assessments. In addition, the teacher provided parents with the page number for home study via the "Home-School Form" and sent it home to the parent or the alternate tutor. The parent then tutored the child on the material indicated by the teacher. During the 8-minute session, the tutor: (a) corrected each error, (b) modeled the correct response and required the

subject to repeat the correct response, (c) instructed the subject to return to the beginning and reread the sentence in which the error occurred, and (d) provided praise for correctly reading the entire sentence. The next day in the classroom, the child read the same material to the teacher during the regular assessment period. The teacher was also instructed to deliver praise and describe any improvement in oral reading ability to the child. The teacher then reported the child's progress to the parent using the "Home-School Form".

Results

With all three subjects, the tutoring procedure produced large gains in the child's oral reading rates and accuracy when assessed by the teacher. Children nearly doubled their correct reading rate while at the same time decreased their error rates by half. As can be seen in Figure 3 (second panel), Student 1 read an average of 30.35 words per minute with 5.36 errors from grade level

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Insert Figure 1 About Here

Ginn 720 material with the teacher in the classroom. Tutoring on this material by the parents at home increased the correct rate to a mean of 60.5 while decreasing the error rate to 2.42. On the nontutored Merrill material (top panel), Subject 1 read an average of 30 words per minute with 2.31 errors during baseline. Parent tutoring in Ginn 720 material appeared to generalize to Merrill remedial material. The mean correct rate during tutoring in Ginn 720 material increased the in-class oral

reading rate on Merrill to 59.82 words per minute and decreased errors to a mean of 1.92. Subject 2 (See panel 3) had a baseline level of 35.76 correct words per minute with 2.85 errors. Tutoring produced an increase in words correct to 65.22 while decreasing errors to .61. Subject 3 (Panel 4) read an average of 50.24 words per minute with 1.76 errors during baseline, and showed the characteristic change to 84.56 words correct and .5 errors per minute. Figure 3 illustrates these changes for each child. Comprehension scores showed no improvement in the percentage across phases. The percent correct for baseline was 96.6 with a treatment mean percentage of 97.

Discussion

The home tutoring procedures, conducted by parents for Subjects 1 and 2, consisting of oral reading practice and a correction procedure, doubled and tripled reading rates for all students involved. In addition, use of an alternative tutor (Subject 3) for a student whose parents could not participate, was successfully demonstrated and also showed significant increases.

The advantages of using the program included increasing the child's oral reaing skill levels without taking away from regular instruction, structuring a home program which was acceptable to parents agreeing to participate, and to teachers based on the high level of positive interactions observed and reading effects observed. The program was extremely satisfying to the teacher, parents, and children as evidenced by parent comments and satisfaction results from all parties.

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Figure Captions

Figure 1. Correct and error rate data across subjects 1, 2, and 3.

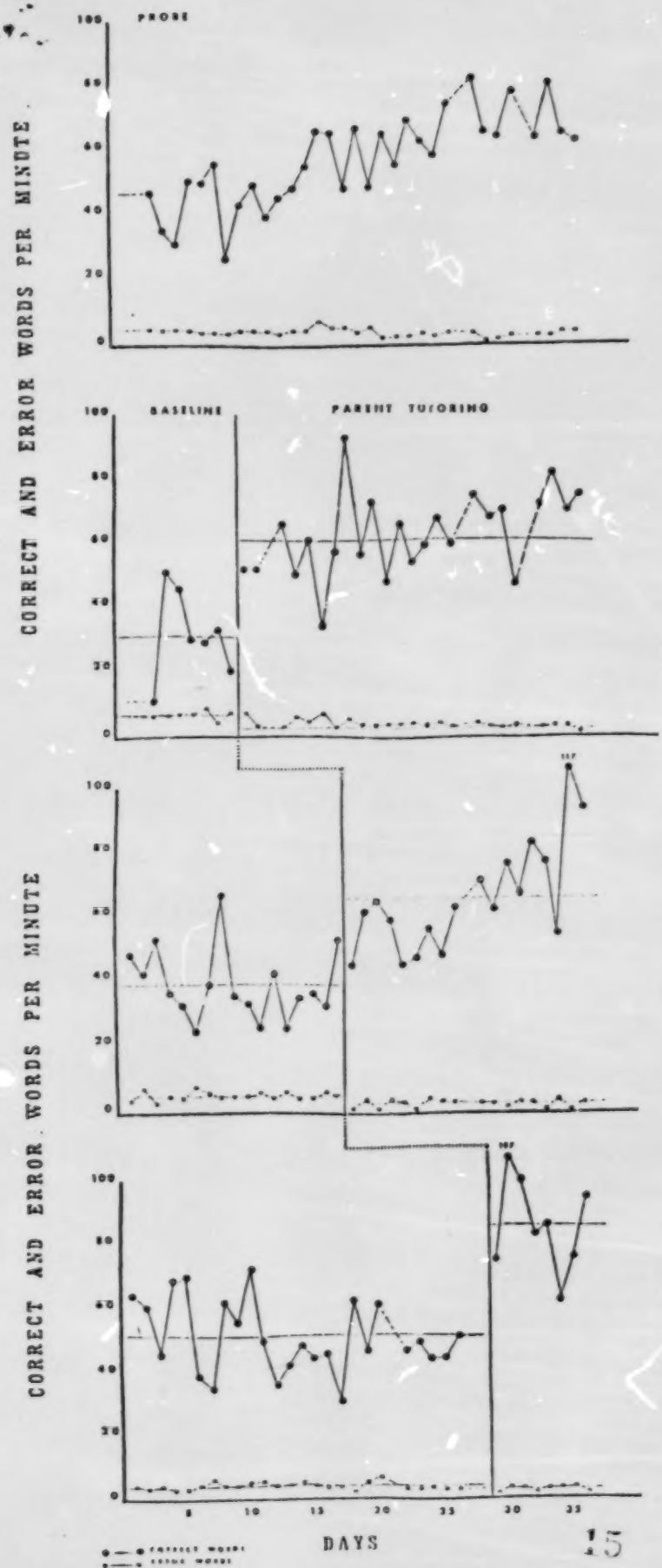

Figure 3. Correct and error rate data across subjects 1, 2, & 3.